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Prevention of armed conflict

Letter dated 31 January 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey herewith a copy of the summary report of the fourth Istanbul Conference on Mediation, entitled "Surge in diplomacy, action in mediation", held in Istanbul on 30 June 2017 (see annex).*

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34.

(*Signed*) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the letter dated 31 January 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Summary Report of the Fourth Istanbul Conference on Mediation

30 June 2017, İstanbul

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey organized the Fourth Istanbul Conference on Mediation on 30 June 2017 under the theme "Surge in Diplomacy, Action in Mediation". The Conference was held under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

The Istanbul Conferences on Mediation are designed to bring together international, governmental and civil society actors engaged in mediation to discuss the ways to enhance interaction, understanding and cooperation among them with a view to improving the effectiveness of mediation efforts across the world. They also contribute to the objectives of the "Mediation for Peace Initiative", launched in 2010 by Turkey and Finland at the United Nations and which has become one of the leading platforms for promoting the wider and more effective use of mediation.

The First Istanbul Conference on Mediation, held on 24 and 25 February 2012 with the theme of "Enhancing Peace through Mediation: New Actors, Fresh Approaches, Bold Initiatives", focused on the theoretical and conceptual aspects of mediation. It was instrumental in analyzing the issues later addressed in the United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation, annexed to the report of the UN Secretary-General entitled "strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution" (A/66/811). The Second Istanbul Conference on Mediation was held on 11 and 12 April 2013 under the theme of "Keys to Successful Mediation: Perspectives from Within", and focused on the practical lessons learned with regard to specific conflicts that were on the international agenda. The Third Istanbul Conference on Mediation was organized on 26 and 27 June 2014 with the theme of "The Increasing Role of Regional Organizations in Mediation", and explored means of reinforcing regional mediation capacities and harnessing local and regional expertise.

Building on the productive discussions in the first three Conferences and considering the recent developments and discussions in the field of mediation, the Fourth Istanbul Conference on Mediation was organized with the awareness on the need of revisiting mediation with a holistic and integrated approach as a way of achieving sustainable peace. In this framework, the Conference elaborated on the role of mediation within the "Surge in Diplomacy for Peace" initiative of the UN Secretary-General Guterres as well as the overall agenda of conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

The Conference was inaugurated with the videomessages of H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, H.E. Timo Soini, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland and H.E. Didier Burkhalter, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland. H.E. Minister Çavuşoğlu called on all UN Member States to support the broad vision and efforts of the UN Secretary General H.E. Guterres to solve today's conflicts. Underlining that prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts is a central feature of Turkey's enterprising and

humanitarian foreign policy, he emphasized the need to train more mediators including women and youth and equipping them with the cultural code of conduct in a given conflict situation. H.E. Guterres thanked Turkey for hosting this important meeting and serving as a committed co-chair of the Group of Friends of Mediation. He also announced that he would establish a High Level Advisory Board on Mediation to further enhance capacity in this critical field. H.E. Soini underlined the importance of continuously assessing mediation work through lessons learnt, sharing experiences and success examples. H.E. Burkhalter enumerated the inner strengths of mediation as patience, cooperation, credibility and know-how. He also warned that mediation requires patience and it is a marathon, not a sprint.

After the inaugural videomessages, H.E. Ambassador Burak Akçapar, Director-General of Policy Planning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, underlined the need for a holistic and innovative thinking about peace in view of the conflict map of the world which is getting more complicated. He drew attention to the fact that all types of conflicts or tensions that may lead to conflicts need to come under the attention of mediation experts and that all stages of a conflict continuum need to benefit from the close engagement of mediation in order to transform the "conflict continuum" into "peace continuum". He also explained the contributions of the "Mediation for Peace" Initiative and the Group of Friends of Mediation to the development of the normative framework in this field.

After the opening remarks of Ambassador Akçapar, the Conference addressed these issues in three senior expert level sessions. The first expert session dealt with practical issues, such as the challenges mediators encounter on the ground, the ways to overcome them, as well as, the reasons of success and failure of mediation efforts in different contexts. The second session concentrated on the role of mediation in the "peace continuum" with a focus on the promise of mediation in different phases of conflicts, including pre-crisis and post-conflict stages. The third session addressed how mediation can be utilized in a broader spectrum of contemporary tensions, concentrating on those driven by discriminatory political, social and religious phobias, which endanger healthy social order in many corners of the world.

Summary of the panel discussions are provided below.

The Summary and Findings of the Conference Sessions

First Session: The Assessment of the Field: Successes, Challenges and the Way Forward

The expert community of mediation operates on a dynamic terrain. Mediators face greater challenges in their mediation efforts as the world keeps changing and conflicts get more complicated. Accordingly, while welcoming the achievements in the field of mediation so far, self-reflection, review and appraisal of experiences including assessment of successes and failures must be done continuously. Only through innovative discussions and exchanges can we bring mediation more in line with realities and necessities on the ground. With these thoughts, the first session of the Conference reviewed what facilitates and hinders success in mediation efforts. In doing so, the session brought forward vast experience, derived from a number of cases around the world, including mediation efforts in Afghanistan, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Syria and the Philippines.

The discussions in the session highlighted that today's mediation operates in a challenging environment where no static "table" with pre-defined "sides" neatly exists. In such a complex environment, action at multiple levels with multiple actors

is needed for effective mediation. Accordingly, the participants welcomed the multiplication of mediation actors since each of them might bring different comparative advantages to the process. Some participants, nevertheless, drew attention to the relevant risks, arguing that the presence of so many actors might dilute responsibility and hinder the success of mediation processes. The session was instrumental in highlighting once more the significance of complementarity among mediation actors and the need for doing more research on practical, as well as, institutional measures to eliminate the potential risks of the multiplication on the ground.

Some participants expressed that accepting mediation might appear as demeaning to conflicting parties in some contexts. In this case, parties might tend to look for a hidden agenda behind the proposals offered by mediators or their counterparts and often reject mediation at the outset of a conflict. Therefore, bestowing legitimacy to the mediation process, mediators and conflicting parties was mentioned as a necessary condition which determines the success of mediation efforts. Re-legitimization and re-valorization of the mediation endeavour remains an important challenge during the whole process.

The participants identified mistrust and fear, either of the counterpart or the third party mediator, as factors that precipitate the legitimacy-related challenges and impede the resolution of a conflict. Such fear is manifest in popular discourse and culture, and is very difficult to address on rational terms. It might easily cause the suggestions coming from the other side to be wasted. Therefore, the participants emphasized the need to deal with fear among parties before and during the mediation process. However, as it was expressed, fear is not an issue that can be negotiated, and its presence carries the negotiation platform away from rational grounds. Some participants mentioned confidence-building measures as a significant instrument of facilitating/keeping the dialogue and naturalizing such fear. Some participants, though, argued that too much reliance on confidence-building measures might reinforce the status-quo and lead to missing of opportunities for the resolution of the conflict in some instances.

It was also mentioned that getting the parties to recognize the other side's existence and narratives is of utmost importance for a successful mediation effort. The parties do not need to agree with the perspective of one another, but recognition of the other side's presence on the table and its views/narratives is key to successful mediation efforts and ultimately sustained peace.

Some participants underlined the importance of empathy, on the side of mediators, as a significant factor facilitating successful mediation. Accordingly, mediators should be skilled in and trained for being able to see events from the eyes of all interested parties. This would have a positive impact on the legitimacy of mediators in the eyes of the conflicting parties and lead to better chances of working in line with their suggestions towards the solution of a conflict.

The participants also drew attention to the significance of procedural matters, arguing that what the issues are and who should be in the room are as important as substantial talks. This issue was also mentioned on the hinges of the discussions related to "national ownership", an established and relevant principle in the field. Some participants expressed that, for the principle of "national ownership" to be effective, the contours of the related polity and political players should be clearly defined. Otherwise, in the absence of a clear allocation of authority, legitimacy and formal relations, the concept of national ownership runs the risk of being ineffective.

Regarding intractable conflicts, it was expressed that starting with areas where progress is possible can be an effective strategy at the beginning, without prejudging the final outcome of the mediation efforts. It was reminded that this strategy was used during the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations which led to the Roadmap for Peace in 2003, when the governments initially evaded the issues that would bring the talks to an immediate halt and focused on very practical and abstract topics.

In addition, the session also highlighted the advantages of "insider mediation", which builds on the principle of "national ownership" and can take place in both Track-I and Track-II channels. It was emphasised that the success of homegrown initiatives, such as those offered by trade unions in Tunisia during the Arab Spring, should not be overlooked.

Welcoming the achievements in the field of mediation so far, the session also underlined the importance of capacity building for further progress. However, it was a point of disagreement whether the challenge is in the demand or supply side, and whether it is one of numbers or quality. Subsuming the arguments raised by the defenders of both points, it can be argued that both supply and demand sides of mediation are still important for further progress. After all, mediation continues to be a "low-tech" exercise, where people skills, more specifically empathy and emotional intelligence, stand out as key qualities towards success. Accordingly, diversification of the mediator portfolio, by pooling talents and mediators from different backgrounds, is equally important to increasing the number of mediators. At the same time, it was also mentioned that, for strengthening capacity on the supply side, the international community should also work on finding innovative ways of creating more demand for mediation.

Innovative thinking was identified in the session as a condition of further progress in the field of mediation. Referring to mutually reinforcing relationship between normative and practical work, the participants showed the interaction among academics and practitioners as a source of innovation. On the one hand, it was argued that conceptual and normative work stimulate progress, introducing creative and innovative solutions needed in the face of the changing nature of conflicts. On the other hand, the practical experiences in the field feed back into the conceptual and normative work which then has to be studied. The participants also emphasized that conceptual and normative work should be subject to constant review and enhancement and academicians and practitioners should continuously strive to improve their approach.

It was also argued that innovative thinking also necessitates mediation to be one tool within a larger foreign policy toolkit. Accordingly, mediation should be considered in conjunction with other tools towards building sustainable peace.

The participants identified locally-sourced, endogenous forms of mediation schemes as another source of innovation in the field of mediation. Such local initiatives are argued to be especially important when sensitivity towards colonial heritage and/or discrimination exists. Some participants also drew attention to the risks of the existence of multiple local perspectives which sometimes might hinder effective mediation, especially when the context lacks the notion of a stalemate.

The discussions during this session highlighted that, since each conflict is unique, the success of mediation processes should also be evaluated uniquely and in contextual terms.

Second Session: Mediation and the "Peace Continuum"

The second session of the Conference outlined the concept of peace continuum and elaborated on the role of mediation in all phases of a conflict cycle — that is, before, during (including early stages) and after conflict. The discussions focused on conflict prevention and eliciting sustainable peace, and identified the challenges to mediation and conflict prevention in practice, and how these might be overcome to ensure effective mediation and results.

As stated in the session, the concept of the peace continuum suggested by the UN Secretary-General Guterres concerns streamlining conflict management efforts and practices generated over decades to make conflict management more efficient. The full spectrum of conflict management, or the peace continuum, includes pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict phases, with a role for mediation in each phase. It was said that peace continuum is a toolbox, which should be used in a coordinated manner. It is viewed as a construct which has a cyclical rather than linear progression.

Emphasizing the importance given to conflict prevention by the UN Secretary-General, it was expressed that the main challenge to conflict prevention stems from the inability to gain leverage, resources, and entry points for involvement rather than a lack of early warning or failure to anticipate likely conflicts. This was also shown as the case for the UN and the OSCE, well-equipped for conflict prevention, but in some cases unable to operationalize their true potential because of the challenges in access and involvement. It was, above all, in this context that the significance of a strengthened role for mediation and diplomacy in the "Surge in Diplomacy for Peace" agenda was stressed. Accordingly, it was emphasized that such an enhanced role requires strategic coherence, enhanced capacity of UN mediation, particularly the improvement of the institutional capacity to conduct mediation, including the pool of mediators, earlier engagement, developing better relationships on the ground to anticipate conflicts, and a more inclusive approach to mediation.

Aside from the barriers of entry, the other factors that determine the success of mediation were counted as: commonality of purpose of regional organizations and the UN, gaining leverage and improving the UN's perceived credibility and legitimacy, and medium/long-term structural prevention strategies that address national institutions and governance systems. Participants also drew attention to the financial concerns, arguing that alarming decreases in the budget further weaken institutions and their mediation capacities.

In this framework, the mediation-related expectations of the UN Secretary General were counted as follows: ensuring better advice from top practitioners; integrating local/national mediation efforts with top-level mediation efforts; enriching Track I diplomacy with the insights, expertise, and knowledge of local actors engaged in local/national mediation efforts; developing a strategy for having better-prepared and equipped envoys and increasing the number of women envoys as well as envoys from non-diplomatic or non-political backgrounds; ensuring close collaboration with regional or sub-regional organizations.

Throughout the session, the participants also discussed extensively the other tools in the peace continuum with a focus on the objective of eliciting sustainable peace. Regarding the post-conflict phase, it was argued that, though international organizations have increasingly assumed roles in the early stages of conflict as well as in post-conflict phases in the post-Cold War era, their involvement in post-conflict reconstruction has decreased. As expressed in the session, there are fewer diplomats but more military and intelligence personnel in the field nowadays, which can be

attributed to the fact that post-conflict peacebuilding, ie. the last phase of the peace continuum, has been a predominantly military-driven practice in the last decade. Several participants drew attention to the significant downsides of this trend.

Nevertheless, it was also stated that, although there have been successful peace enforcement practices, reliance on Chapter VII military measures for managing conflicts is not always the best choice for two reasons. Firstly, a United Nations Security Council decision authorizing military intervention may not be possible because of deadlock, as in the case of Syria. Secondly, military engagements may not necessarily be followed by reconstruction efforts, as in the case of Libya. This was also shown among the reasons why the UN Secretary-General Guterres has been emphasizing Chapter VI rather than Chapter VII measures in the peace continuum.

In the session, the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina was shown as the international community's most successful state- and peace-building exercise and as a good example where all the concepts, tools, and mechanisms of the full spectrum of conflict management have been employed. However, it was also reminded that, for eliciting sustainable peace, post-conflict peacebuilding requires both negative peace (ending the violence) and positive peace (removal of the structural and cultural underlying causes of violence). If peacebuilding efforts are merely directed at negative peace, a relapse into violence remains a possibility given that the causes of the conflict continue in post-war politics. Therefore, long-term sustainability of peace requires constitutional-institutional reform (state-building), social reconstruction, reconciliation, and the development of economic, social, and political infrastructures.

Reconciliation and psychological factors were shown as the hardest among those for external actors and institutions to achieve. While peace enforcement by third parties may be necessary in certain circumstances, it was expressed that this cannot guarantee sustainable peace. The imposition of norms and institutions does not necessarily lead to societies' internalization of them and thus to sustainable peace. Local and regional norms and values should therefore be understood in a cultural context. Hence, it was said that international organizations need to work with local/regional partners and not merely with their own member states. The positive impact of peacebuilding efforts led by regional countries were also underlined, since such countries understand the history and culture of the region better than external actors.

At the same time, it was also cautioned that all the necessary aspects of peacebuilding can be realized only in secure environments. Therefore, it was emphasized that sustainable peace requires a coordinated programming of development (including good governance and participatory governance), human rights and security issues in both pre- and post-conflict stages.

In the session, the participants also delineated what they saw essential for successful mediation on the basis of their experiences on the ground. Accordingly, they first drew attention to the importance of the timing of mediation and creating ripe moments for mediation, as well as acting on them before opportunities fade away. Referring to the direct link between tools on the ground and the political process, the participants also argued that it is crucial to clearly identify the conflicting parties as well as their objectives and expectations in the mediation process. Besides, they underlined the importance of political will and conflicting actors' willingness to compromise. As such, they stated that third parties need to take a holistic approach that considers the needs and demands of the conflicting parties to create environments conducive to finding political resolutions.

Third Session: Potential of Mediation in A Broader Spectrum of Tensions

The third session was structured on the observation that various forms of political, social and religious animosities, such as xenophobia and racism, are in ascendancy all around the world, including the developed world, triggering discrimination-based tensions and conflicts and endangering healthy national and international order. Given the insufficiencies of traditional approaches and tools in addressing them, the session aimed to explore innovative methods, with a particular interest in mediation, in order to contribute to the prevention or resolution of such tensions and conflicts for the sake of peaceful and inclusive societies. As such, the session focused on how mediation can be utilized in addressing discrimination-based tensions and conflicts based on political, social and religious animosities.

The session started with the observation that discrimination-based tensions and conflicts negate the very essence of globalization. As a result, in the age of increased mobility, harmony, peaceful coexistence and respect for differences have become increasingly scarce values at a time when they are needed the most. Due to the challenges this presents to the social resilience of our countries and the international community, it was expressed that international community should urgently develop adequate instruments to strengthen such values and take steps to prevent and resolve discrimination-based tensions and conflicts.

It was also observed in the session that the mainstream mass media and some policy circles often associate the concepts such as identity, civilization and religion with violence and conflict. In this environment, minority groups and immigrants are often treated as security issues. However, securitizing and criminalizing identity and culture related issues and problems cannot be helpful. As pointed out by many participants in the session, identities do not drive conflicts. Rather, tensions and conflicts mostly stem from the problem of fear and lack of empathy towards communities perceived to be different, especially in times of change and destabilization, as well as related concerns and competition over material interests.

Accordingly, the session underlined the significance of working on the root causes of discrimination-based tensions and conflicts by creating spaces of dialogue and interaction as well as tackling the sense of exclusion, injustices and lack of opportunities. As stated in this session, what is needed is to strengthen the culture of interculturalism, a notion based on the respect for the right to be different, through human-centric, bottom-up, participatory and restorative mechanisms and processes. It was expressed that, unless such mechanisms are developed, international community could only deal with the symptoms of broader challenges.

As a method of peaceful resolution and prevention of conflicts, mediation is based on greater communication, dialogue and mutual understanding. Therefore, mediation may generate many ideas and opportunities in the prevention and resolution of such conflicts. In this context, the participants especially drew attention to two mediation models at communal or inter-group levels — community mediation or peer mediation — as useful instruments for building trust among communities and precipitating the notion and sense of coexistence and harmony. These models help empower local actors to mend their difficult relations and address their underlying needs and grievances. In this respect, such models could offer community-level solutions to the problems of our time such as, racism, xenophobia, religious animosities, lack of empathy in complex societies and practices of exclusion. As pointed out by some participants, such models may also help reduce social tensions, especially in the countries which began to host greater number of immigrants or in

the failed or dysfunctional states, by creating dialogue and communication spaces among different communities.

Underlining the significance of promoting the culture of mediation at the societal level and making it an everyday practice, the participants put forward concrete measures. In this respect, they emphasized the significance of more enhanced role for youth, as well as women, through training and involvement in mediation activities. The role of education and the incorporation of mediation-related topics into national curriculum, as well as into family law, were also stressed. Some participants also drew attention to the significance of working with local people who have legitimacy in the eyes of the local people, such as elders or other types of key people in specific cultural contexts, and empowering them. Training of the elderly people for mediation purposes was seen as helpful also in dealing with the problem of youth radicalization.

In the session, it was stated that national efforts in addressing discrimination-based tensions and conflicts should be complemented by multilateral efforts at regional and international platforms, and sub-regional/regional/transregional organizations as well as the greater role that the UN should take. Accordingly, it was also expressed that broader applicability and transfer of the ideas and lessons from the community-level experiences to regional and international levels should be considered and best practices should be shared.

Within the framework of such discussions, the work of the Council of Europe (CoE) was identified as a guiding example, especially with reference to ROMED, a project of training for intercultural mediation launched in cooperation with the CoE and the EU and applied across Europe in two phases. The publications and manuals prepared within the project of ROMED, with the purpose of greater integration of Roma communities, were said to be a valuable guidance. The participants also pointed to the work of the CoE on developing a model on competences for democratic culture, arguing that many elements of this model are relevant to mediation.

The work of the OIC was also identified very significant in terms of regional capacity building in mediation. In the session, some relevant conclusions of the 13th Islamic Summit Conference, organized in Istanbul in April 2016, were referred to as significant steps in this regard, such as: the adoption of the concept of "Islamic Rapprochement", sponsored by Turkey and Kazakhstan and calling upon Member States to handle their tensions through dialogue and consultation mechanisms; the announcement of the formation of a Contact Group for Muslims in Europe to lay out strategies and share best practices for eliminating hate speech, practices of intolerance, prejudices, racial discrimination and animosity against Islam. Also reminding the role of the OIC in the adoption by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011 of the Resolution 16/18 on "combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatisation of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief", the participants stressed that the international community should strengthen its commitment to the Istanbul Process, initiated in the same year to promote and guide the implementation of this resolution. The "Islamophobia Observatory", an annual report prepared by the OIC with the intention to raise awareness on the challenges posed by animosity against Islam by publicizing information on attacks with this content from all around the world, was also counted among OIC's efforts in this area.

The special role of the Alliance of Civilizations (AoC), jointly launched by Turkey and Spain in 2005 and then embraced by the then UN Secretary-General as a UN initiative, in reducing polarization at local and global levels and developing more

inclusive and resilient societies, was also discussed extensively. Conducting different types of activities against cultural animosities and hate speech with a focus on youth, education and media, the AoC was said to have a significant preventive potential. Therefore, it was identified as a significant platform and instrument in the context of the "Surge in Diplomacy for Peace" initiative of the UN Secretary-General. It was also said that the activities of the AoC complement traditional mediation efforts, bridging differences among communities and helping create an environment conducive to mediation. It was stated that AoC can play a mutually reinforcing role with the UN Group of Friends of Mediation, co-chaired by Turkey and Finland. Furthermore, given the significance of the activities of the AoC in addressing challenges posed by discriminatory and extremist trends, the participants agreed on the need to further strengthen the AoC in the period ahead.

In the session, it was also mentioned that peace processes and traditional mediation activities do not take place in a vacuum, but in a cultural context. Drawing on the argument that mediation practices should take account of cultural needs, participants highlighted the need to train mediators by sensitizing them to the needs of different communities. Pointing to the significance of capacity building in the field of culturally sensitive mediation, it was stated that the UN and other regional/trans-regional organizations could prepare a Guidance on Culturally Sensitive Mediation to meet the need in both the study and practice of mediation in this regard.

Concluding Remarks

In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Burak Akçapar recalled that mediation is a dynamic field requiring constant evaluation and development. He reemphasized that mediation practices should be in line with the changing nature of conflicts and that we need to focus on what to do next. He summed up the need for action, out of the box thinking and innovative methods, as the Conference discussions have demonstrated.

PROGRAMME
(Venue: Conrad Hotel)

08.30–09.00	Registration
09.00–09.30	**Opening Speech**
	H.E. Dr. Burak Akçapar, Ambassador, Director General for Policy Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey
09.30–11.30	**First Session:**
	The Assessment of the Field: Successes, Challenges and the Way Forward
	The expert community of mediation operates on a dynamic terrain. Mediators face greater challenges in their mediation efforts as the world keeps changing and conflicts get more complicated.
	While welcoming the achievements in the field of mediation so far, self-reflection, review and appraisal of experiences including assessment of successes and failures must be done continuously. Furthermore, only through innovative discussions and exchanges can we bring mediation more in line with the realities and necessities on the ground.
	Considering the lessons learned from concrete cases, the Fourth Istanbul Conference would review initially what facilitates and hinders success in mediation efforts.
	By stimulating exchanges on best practices and experiences, the Conference aims to set the stage for innovation in the field of mediation practice and research.
	***Moderator*: Dr. Meltem Müftüler Baç**, Professor, Jean Monnet Chair, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University
	***Rapporteur*: Dr. Emre Hatipoğlu**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University
	Panellists:
	H.E. Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Former UN Under-Secretary-General
	H.E. Dr. Yossi Beilin, Former Minister of Justice of Israel
	Dr. Barnett Rubin, Senior Fellow, Center on International Cooperation, New York University
	Dr. Jose Vericat, Adviser, International Peace Institute
	Q&A

13.20–15.20 **Second Session:**

Mediation and the "Peace Continuum"

Conflicts emerge and are resolved in a continuum. The UN Secretary General has set out a vision for peace which involves: "a comprehensive, modern and effective operational peace architecture, encompassing prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development — the peace continuum".

Mediation's relevance in the full conflict cycle, including in prevention as well as in early stages of conflicts and the post-agreement processes, needs further discussion. A related concern is strengthening the complementarity and continuity among measures taken at different phases of the conflict cycle and what role mediation can play in this regard.

The Fourth Istanbul Conference on Mediation would promote an innovative and ground breaking discussion on these topics with the aim of exploring the potential contributions of mediation to the UN Secretary General's "Surge in Diplomacy for Peace" agenda.

***Moderator*: Dr. Ersel Aydınlı**, Professor, Department of International Relations, Bilkent University

***Rapporteur*: Dr. Tuba Turan**, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, İstanbul Kemerburgaz University

Panellists:

Mr. Asif Khan, Chief of Mediation Support Unit of the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Marcel Pesko, Ambassador, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre

Dr. Gülnur Aybet, Professor, Senior Advisor to the President of the Republic of Turkey, Department of International Relations of Yıldız Technical University

H.E. Mr. Levent Şahinkaya, Ambassador, Chairman of Independent Decommissioning Body in the South Philippines Peace Process

Q&A

15.20–15.40 *Coffee Break*

15.40–17.40 **Third Session:**

Potential of Mediation in A Broader Spectrum of Tensions

The drivers of contemporary conflicts proliferate and prevention as well as the role of mediation needs to be explored within a broad spectrum of contemporary tensions.

Various kinds of political, social and religious animosities, including xenophobia and racism, etc., are in ascendancy all around the world, creating problems for healthy national and international order. Hardly any country or society seems totally immune to these tensions.

Despite the rising salience of this issue, the role of mediation in dealing with the tensions based on such animosities is a less researched topic in the study of mediation so far. Closer scrutiny and enhanced discussions are needed on how mediation can be utilized, especially at the community level, in addressing such tensions for the sake of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Facilitating an interactive dialogue on this topic, the Fourth Istanbul Conference aims to contribute to the use of mediation in a much broader spectrum of contemporary tensions. As such, it also seeks to draw policy-relevant findings by exploring the potential contributions of various forms of domestic mediation, such as community and peer mediation, to conflicts or tensions based on political, social and religious animosities. Such findings may also support national ownership, which is one of the preconditions of success in peace processes and as important as local efforts in mediation.

Furthermore, elaborating the possible areas of action at different levels, the Conference will also address the complementarity between the work of the "Mediation for Peace" and "Alliance of Civilizations" initiatives within the UN as well as the role of regional organizations. An idea, for instance, would be, in addition to the already existing work on including women more in the mediation processes, to develop at UN and regional or trans-regional organizations guidelines for culturally sensitive mediation training and training for peer and youth mediators as well as building regional and local capacity to address youth inclusion and culturally sensitive mediation.

***Moderator*: H.E. Mr. Rauf Engin Soysal**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Turkey to the OSCE

***Rapporteur*: Dr. Talha Köse**, Associate Professor, Head of Department of International Relations, Ibn Khaldun University

Panellists:

H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Under-Secretary-General, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

H.E. Mr. Yahaya Lawal, Ambassador, Director in Charge of African Affairs at Political Department, General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Ms. Tuija Talvitie, Executive Director, Crisis Management Initiative

Mr. Calin Rus, Director, Intercultural Institute of Timisoara

Dr. Talha Köse, Associate Professor, Head of Department of International Relations, Ibn Khaldun University

Q&A

17.40–18.10 ***Closing Remarks***

H.E. Dr. Burak Akçapar, Ambassador, Director General for Policy Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey